



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: MAY 26, 2004

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW OF FIELD ALLOCATION POLICY

DATE: MAY 14, 2004

FROM: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT - RECREATION DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: JANA M. RANSOM, RECREATION MANAGER

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RUTH RAHEB, RECREATION SUPERVISOR
(714) 754-5653**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the amended Field Use and Allocation Policy with the new Priority Group One Strike Procedure, the Temporary Light Policy, and Allocation Percentage Formula.

Receive and file.

BACKGROUND

On May 23, 2001, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy recommended by a community Field Use Committee identified by City Council and charged with the responsibility to conduct a comprehensive review of the then current Athletic Field Use policy. The document was approved by City Council June 18, 2001. An annual review of the Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy was recommended to assess the effectiveness of the policy and address areas of concern by staff as well as user groups.

The Joint Use Agreement (Attachment A) was approved by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District July 11, 2002, the Parks and Recreation Commission August 28, 2002 and the City Council September 16, 2002 and was implemented January 1, 2003. The JUA is an agreement in which the City and NMUSD have committed to and agree to share facilities and resources in the spirit of cooperation to benefit both of our constituents, the youth and adult residents of Costa Mesa. The agreement allows the City of Costa Mesa to expand the availability of recreational fields and facilities within the Community by utilizing and allocating Newport Mesa Unified School District schools located within the city limits of Costa Mesa. The community can now visit City Hall for their entire Costa Mesa field needs instead of going to the Newport-Mesa Unified School District and/or individual schools.

The JUA agreement covers active use areas only, encompassing athletic fields, high school gymnasiums and swimming pools. To better serve the community, the Costa Mesa Recreation Division took over the allocating/permitting of Newport Mesa Unified School District fields/facilities as available weekdays after 4:00 p.m. (5:00 p.m. at each high school), all day Saturday, Sunday, during session breaks and summer. Fields previously allocated by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District office, i.e. Killybrooke, Harper, Adams, Back Bay, Lindbergh, College Park, Whittier and Wilson are additional sites being permitted by the Recreation Division.

After approval of the JUA, staff revised the Field/Facility Use And Allocation Policy to complement the new Joint Use Agreement with the Newport Mesa Unified School District. The new Joint Use Agreement and Field Use and Allocation Policy update revisions were reviewed with field users at the Field User bi-annual meeting of December 4, 2003.

School construction is currently in progress at a variety of schools in Costa Mesa as part of the Newport-Mesa Unified School District Measure "A" program, eliminating some athletic field areas from use. Staff is working closely with user groups to accommodate field needs as field space allows.

ANNUAL REVIEW INFORMATION FOR 2003

Staff continues to meet with all field user groups at least twice a year as a group in the mandatory Field Users Bi-Annual Meeting, held June 3 and December 2 of 2003. Field user groups are asked to bring comments and/or suggestions to help strengthen the Costa Mesa Athletic Field Policy. At the December 2, 2003 Field User Bi-Annual Meeting, the Sports Fields Inclement Weather Closure Policy was revised with input from user groups.

Sports Fields Inclement Weather Closure Policy

The purpose of the Sports Fields Inclement Weather Closure Policy (Attachment B) is to guide the use of City/NMUSD athletic fields, to prevent injuries to field users brought upon by inclement weather or unsafe playing conditions *and* to prevent damage to the playing surface. Users wanted a more accurate assessment of fields reported on the MUDLINE. Since conditions on all 66 fields cannot easily be identified and reported, Recreation Division staff worked with Parks Division staff to revise the criteria to be more responsive to the concerns expressed at the field user's Bi-Annual Allocation Meeting.

During inclement weather, City maintenance workers assess the playability of all City owned and Newport Mesa Unified School District athletic fields *to determine if use will occur that day*. City of Costa Mesa reserves the right to cancel or suspend approved outdoor facility or field use permits for games, practices and other uses whenever it is anticipated that weather or field conditions could result in damage to the fields or injury to players.

Maintenance staff now inspects five (5) benchmark locations used to determine the status of all fields within the City of Costa Mesa. The benchmark locations to be used are the Farm Sports Complex Fields; TeWinkle Park Baseball, Softball and Soccer/Utility Fields; TeWinkle Middle School Soccer/Utility and Baseball Fields; Kaiser Middle School Soccer and Baseball Fields; and the Costa Mesa High School Baseball Fields. When 3 or more benchmark locations are deemed unplayable by category (Soccer/Utility or Softball/Baseball) all fields in that category will be closed.

City staff use the following criteria to determine field playability and inspect each of the benchmark locations to determine the playability of those fields keeping in mind both turf and infields.

Baseball and Softball In-fields – Brick Dust Staff will step onto the playing surface to determine moisture content. If his or her foot sinks into the brick dust at least ½", the field will be deemed unplayable.

Soccer, Utility, Baseball and Softball Fields – Turf To determine playability of turf fields such as soccer, baseball and softball maintenance staff shall walk the fields looking for saturated or areas of pooling water. Staff will then take moisture readings using a soil moisture meter, Model #6405 as manufactured by Spectrum Technology. This instrument is widely used in the golf course and turf maintenance industries. To take a reading, the probe of the meter will be inserted into the soil to a depth not to exceed 2 ½ inches. The gauge on the meter has a range of 1 to 10, with 10 being the wettest. A reading that registers between 8 and 10 shall constitute saturated condition and fields unplayable.

Moisture readings will be taken at pre-determined locations. Baseball and softball fields will have readings taken at locations where players would normally be positioned such as left, center and right fields. A reading will also be taken on the turf just behind the shortstop position.

Results are posted by use category on the City's Wet Field MUDLINE Monday - Friday by 2:30 p.m. and Saturday - Sunday by 7:30 a.m. The MUDLINE identifies closures by field use category Soccer/Utility Fields or Softball/Baseball Fields.

Costa Mesa National Little League requested permission to take responsibility for assessing field conditions after rain at the sites they are using again this year. Although the City appreciates all the work Little League volunteers do to enhance the fields and playing experiences for our youth it was important to share that many user groups put volunteer time and money into the fields and facilities they use through City permitted use. Ultimately, the Newport Mesa Unified School District has given the City the responsibility to provide all field users access to locations and safe playing conditions so the request was denied.

The Annual Rest and Renovation Program continues to be scheduled at each field site. The City's Parks Division schedules rest and renovation periods for fields and are the professionals who should make that call for when fields rest, not the user groups. When use schedules for all user groups are accurately reflected through the permitting process, staff can currently accommodate all groups' requests and still have safe and adequate field conditions. The Public Services Department attempts to be flexible in accommodating user groups but, ultimately, the City must be concerned with the health and safety of the user.

Field Ambassadors

The Recreation Division works closely with field user groups to address the concerns of residents throughout the community and to enhance communications between staff, field users and community. To assist with compliance, the Recreation Division Field Ambassadors continue to visit all sites to insure field users are permitted and using fields correctly. Upon each visit staff notes the organization, time and actual number of participants to help create a matrix of actual needs. Field Ambassadors are scheduled to work when the fields are scheduled for use. During the school year, Ambassadors generally work Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Summer and Holiday hours are 7:30 a.m. up to 10:00 p.m., again depending upon use. Field Ambassadors call City Dispatch to request assistance from either Rangers and/or Police if the situation warrants, or citation authority is needed.

Newport Mesa Unified School District

The Newport Mesa Unified School District has added a roving maintenance crew that will begin operating this summer at all schools in Costa Mesa working weekends to maintain school restrooms, empty trashcans, and to help keep the fields free of trash.

The "Three Strike" Policy

The Three Strike Policy (Attachment C) is in its third year of operation and continues to work very well. The purpose of this policy is to implement a systematic method of enforcing the Municipal Code and Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy. Staff used the first year of the Three Strike Policy to work with user groups in the education mode. Several "strikes" have been issued in 2003 and most user groups have worked very hard to alleviate the need for strikes to be issued.

Several adult user groups, and occasionally individuals, over the years have had permits revoked for blatant misuse. The City reserves the right to cancel or suspend approved outdoor facility permits for games, practices, and other usages based on user groups violating the City Municipal Code or the established Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy.

NEW Priority Group One Strike Procedure

This year a variation of the Three Strike Policy was established for Group 1 User Organizations through a focus group comprised of representatives from each of our nine Group 1 User organizations (non-profit or not for profit organizations who partner with the City, have at least 90% residents, have open registration regardless of skill level; and provide an “everyone plays” philosophy). The purpose of new Priority Group One Strike Procedure (Attachment D) is to confirm a commitment between the City and Priority Group One field user organizations to enhance communications between staff, Group One field users, the Newport Mesa Unified School District and the community working within the Municipal Code and Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy to eliminate use issues.

Understanding that being better neighbors would benefit everyone, the Group One User Organizations have agreed to communicate within their groups to educate participants, coaches and parents to become increasingly more responsible working within the Municipal Code and Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy, especially where traffic, noise, trash, MUDLINE issues and parking are concerned. By enhancing communication everyone felt that we would all benefit.

Youth organizations qualifying for Group 1 Users and received City Council granted fee waivers are AYSO 120, AYSO 97, Costa Mesa National Little League, Costa Mesa American Little League, Newport Harbor Baseball, Pop Warner Football, Costa Mesa Pony Baseball, Costa Mesa Youth Soccer Association and the Boys and Girls Club of the Harbor Area.

California/TeWinkle Schools

At the July 14, 2003, Study Session, Staff brought to the City Council various issues relating to youth athletic field use at California/TeWinkle Schools. One issue discussed related to banners displayed by youth sports groups on fences and backstops. Residents adjacent to the school questioned whether or not the banners are in compliance with the City's sign ordinance.

Banner Ordinance

Council requested staff further research the banner issue and return to Council with revised language to the Municipal Code, if appropriate, for a Banner Ordinance. Research into the banner regulations indicated that the language was written specifically to address commercial and industrial properties, not youth organization banners displayed on athletic fields or school grounds.

Recreation staff met with Development Services and City Attorney staff to discuss the language to include athletic fields under the existing sign/banner regulations and proposed an ordinance revision. City Council, after receiving public comment on April 5, 2004, directed Development Services to further review and refine the ordinance and come back to Council for consideration.

NEW Temporary Light Policy

There are some occasions throughout the year that may require a youth or adult sporting group to use temporary, portable lights to allow for practice or games. Temporary Light Policy guidelines have been established that specify the process for requesting temporary, portable lights for City and District sports fields and how it will reflect the established Good Neighbor Policy. All community based youth or adult sports groups who request and are approved to use temporary, portable lights for sports fields will follow the procedures outlined in Attachment E.

NEW Allocation Percentage Formula

To resolve a discrepancy between two organizations that request use the same site/field and that can not be worked out between the two organizations, the following allocation formula will be used to determine the number of fields that will be allocated to each organization.

- The total number of organization participants that are Costa Mesa residents will be divided by the Minimum Roster Size for each sport to determine the total number of teams in an organization.

- Minimum Roster Sizes
Football: 25 / 33 **Soccer:** 14 (regulation) or 10 (7 on 7) **Baseball Softball:** 12
- The total number of teams in an organization will be divided by the total number of teams from all organizations in question which determines an organization's allocation percentage.

An example of this would be:

Baseball Group A has 756 Costa Mesa residents.
756 divided by 12 equals 63 teams.

Baseball Group B has 900 Costa Mesa residents.
900 divided by 12 equals 75 teams.

75 plus 63 equals 138 total teams.
63 divided by 138 equals 45.65% of allocation for Group A.
75 divided by 138 equals 54.35% of allocation for Group B.

Community and Field User Input

Staff has received compliments concerning the information and organization of the Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy document (Attachment F), the execution of field allocation process and the knowledge and accessibility of the Field Ambassadors. Park Rangers have noted far fewer disturbance calls and citations issued. Communication between community stakeholders has been enhanced since the Rangers work closely with the Field Ambassadors who in turn work closely with the user groups.

Bi-Annual Field Users Meeting

The 2004 bi-annual mandatory Field Users Meetings are scheduled for Thursday, June 3 and Thursday, December 2, 2004.

Field Revenues and Part Time Staff Expenditures

During the 2003 calendar year, \$90,000 in revenue was collected for field and rentals for approximately 69,000 hours of use. Fees waived for Group 1 Users equaled \$459,000. Field Ambassador part-time staff expenditures were \$53,103; working approximately 5,000 hours.

CONCLUSION

The Recreation Division continues to work closely with all field user groups, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District and City maintenance staff in a collaborative effort for cultural, social, and recreational activities and programs for our community. Each partner continues to address the concerns of residents throughout the community and to enhance communications between staff, field users and community.

JANA M. RANSOM
Recreation Manager

STEVEN E. HAYMAN
Administrative Services Director

RUTH A. RAHEB
Recreation Supervisor

- Attachments: A – [Joint Use Agreement between Newport-Mesa Unified School District and the City of Costa Mesa, July 1, 2002.](#)
B – [Sports Fields Inclement Weather Closure Policy](#)
C – [Three Strike Policy](#)
D – [Priority Group One Strike Procedure](#)
E – [Temporary Light Policy](#)
F – [Amended Athletic Field/Facility Use and Allocation Policy](#)